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## LUCY ARMISTEAD TO MRS. MARIA ARMISTEAD.

[Part of this letter is missing.]

reading. Mr. Byrd rides and we work till dinner which comes in at three. When the Weather is fine we generally take a walk, when we return we drink Tea or Coffee. At night we work, while Mr. Byrd reads to us; at nine we go to bed: this is the manner in which we spend our Time when are entirely alone; pray Mama let me Know what you think of it. How much am I obliged to my Dear Mama for inquiring what I was most in need of; I am very well off for everything but Gowns: a few pocket handkerchiefs would not be amiss, though I would not for the world have my Dear Mama put herself to any trouble about them. You say you must insist on my taking more pains with my writing. That will be useless, as you say the Gentlemen have lost the Art of making Pens. I agree with you. I think they have, and when I have a bad pen it is impossible to write well. With duty to my Dear Mama, & love to my Sisters,

I remain your

Dutyful Daughter,

LUCY ARMISTEAD.

P. S. Mammy Amy desires her love, & begs you will save some of the young Ladies old Gowns for her.

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PIONEER DAYS IN ALLEGHANY COUNTY.

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(By W. A. McALLISTER, Warm Springs, Va.)

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The history of Western Virginia has been sadly neglected by every historian with a more than local prominence.

The reasons for this may be partially explained by a glance at the map of Virginia and by a brief review of the past and a glimpse at the present inhabitants of this section. Taking Alleghany as the county specially under consideration, let us examine its location and note its boundary line. Bordered as it is by chains of mountains and interspersed with valleys and ridges

alternately, providing, as the only natural outlets, a concourse of rugged streams, is it surprising that its attractions were long meeting recognition? With an early settlement of hardy pioneers, having few literary tastes, rapidly replaced by heterogeneous immigrants as the hand of progress pushed toward its wealthy stores, is it remarkable that its annals have been ill preserved? Yet like all the counties adjoining the Blue Ridge on the west, Alleghany was for many decades the scene of treacherous outrages at the hands of the savage Reds, not to mention the milder dangers of wild animals to which the border settlers were continually subjected.

Augusta county (formed in 1745) had no definite boundary on the west, and is, therefore, the mother county of all western Virginia.

But her territory was not long left unscathed, for the liberty-loving people of Fincastle soon (1769) claimed the county of Botetourt from her bosom soil, and Bath held her first court in 1791. Not, however, till 1822 was Alleghany carved from Botetourt, Bath and Monroe.

#### EARLY SETTLEMENT.

The exact date of the pioneers arrival in this county is not known, but as Fort Young was built by Peter Hogg in 1756, according to specifications furnished by Colonel George Washington and at the command of Governor Dinwiddie, it is probable the settlers had become numerous at that time.

It is a further authenticated fact that William Mann, who occupied Salt Petre Cave on Jackson river as his first habitation west of his Erin home, had built a strongly stockaded fort before 1761.

The early settlers were chiefly Scotch-Irish and therefore covenanters, but we find that "The Vestry of Augusta parish had established a 'chapel of ease' at the forks of James river, and paid Sampson Mathews a small salary for his services (as reader) at that point; but in the fall of 1757, the greater part of the inhabitants thereabouts 'having deserted their plantations by reason of the enemy Indians,' it was resolved that the chapel referred to was unnecessary, and the services of the reader were discontinued."

Unlike the majority of the cavaliers, Governor Dinwiddie\* was peculiarly strenuous in his temperance views; nor did he neglect the opportunity of divulging his principles to the remoter settlers, as is shown in his communication to Major Lewis. He thus admonishes him: "Recommend morality and sobriety to all people." It is probable the admonition was well placed, for they were not all covenanters of the stricter sect, and no doubt apple-jack and red-eye were favorites of many.

One of the leading pioneers of this county was Peter Wright, a famous hunter, who resided near the present site of Covington. It is by him that Peters mountain got its name.

There is a large projecting rock on this mountain known as Peter's Rock; and tradition tells us that while crossing the mountain one winter he was overtaken by a snow-storm and took refuge beneath the crest of this rock. The depth of the snow compelled him to spend several days in his rude abode without a morsel of food. His intense hunger induced him to chew his moccasins and the nourishment obtained from them sustained him until a deer could be killed. It was a further matter of tradition that Wright had hidden a quantity of money near this rock, but this was not verified until recently, when Mr. Jourdan Helmentaler, after diligent search, exhumed at the point designated a casket containing some valuable coins.

#### FORT YOUNG.

As stated, this fort was constructed in 1756. Its location was only a few yards from the present site of the large iron furnace at Covington. In excavating for the foundation some Indian relics were unearthed and are now in possession of Mr. Frank Lyman—the former owner of the furnace. In 1761, about sixty Shawnee Indians invaded the settlement at the forks of James river, and after killing some half dozen men, captured Mrs. Hannah Dennis, Mrs. Renix and Mrs. Smith with five of Mrs.

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\* "Cavalier" is simply a term frequently used by writers to describe the inhabitants of eastern Virginia during the Colonial period. Governor Dinwiddie was a shrewd Scotchman, with probably more traits resembling his fellow-countrymen (in origin) of the Valley, than any usually ascribed to the English Cavaliers.—Ed.

Renix's children and a servant girl named Sally Jew. Among the massacred were the above named ladies' husbands. The Indians then separated; twenty of them returned to the Ohio with the captives, while the remaining forty started up the Cowpasture river. The settlers were hastily notified and assembled at Paul's fort. From thence the Indians were pursued and overtaken. A brief skirmish ensued in which nine of the savages were slain and the others put to flight. The remainder of the story is given by Withers: "According to the stipulation of Boquet's treaty with the Shawnees, Mrs. Renix and two of her sons, Robert and William (later Col. Renix—both late of Greenbrier) were brought to Staunton and redeemed. Joshua Renix took an Indian wife, became a chief of the Miamies and died near Detroit (1810)."

Hannah Dennis was allotted to the Chillicothe towns. She learned the Indian language and practiced their manner and customs. She became proficient in nursing the sick and finding the savages believers in necromancy and witchcraft she practiced both. The Indians being very susceptible, she was given perfect liberty and treated as a queen. In June, 1763, the opportunity of escape which she sought was given and she at once availed herself of it. As soon as her intention was suspected, she was pursued and fired upon, but seeking refuge in the hollow limb of a fallen sycamore she avoided detection and succeeded in making her way safely to the Levels on Greenbrier river. She was found here in an exhausted state and taken to the home of Archibald Clendennin. She had then been upwards of twenty days on her disconsolate journey, alone, and with no other food than green grapes, herbs and wild cherries. When she had sufficiently recuperated, she was taken on horse-back to Fort Young and from thence returned to her relatives.

In October, 1764, about fifty Delaware and Mingo warriors ascended the Big Sandy and came over on New river; there the party divided, a portion going toward the Catawba settlement (in Botetourt), while the other division crossed over to Dunlap's creek. Following that stream to its confluence, they crossed Jackson river above Fort Young, and skirting the settlement

about the fort, proceeded to Carpenters Fort,\* which was at that time in charge of a Mr. Brown. Meeting William Carpenter near the fort, they killed and scalped him, and coming to the fort captured Carpenter's son Joseph, two small Brown children and a woman. No other whites being close the Indians plundered the house, and retreated precipitately by way of Greenbrier river. The shot that killed Carpenter was heard at Fort Young, but the weakness of the garrison there and the paucity of the settlers, necessitated the summoning of aid from Captain Audley Paul at Fort Dinwiddie (twenty-five miles up Jackson river). This worthy leader immediately started in pursuit, but was unable to overtake this party of the savages, though he accidentally encountered those who had gone to the Catawba. The Indians were surprised and easily routed. Joseph Carpenter afterwards became Dr. Carpenter, of Nicholas county, and the younger Brown became Colonel Samuel Brown, late of Greenbrier. The elder Brown cast his lot with the Indians, whom he learned to love, and among his captors sought and won the idol of his heart. The account of his single visit to his aged mother (then residing in Greenbrier) is impressively portrayed by Colonel John G. Gamble and copied by Waddell in his *Annals of Augusta*. He (J. Brown) died in Michigan (1815) loved and respected for his zeal and philanthropy.

A familiar frequenter at Fort Young was an Indian hunter, Mad Anthony. He was valuable to the whites as he told all he knew of the inimical plots of his race, but as he was a tattler, both sides were cautious in taking him into confidence. He often left the fort ostensibly to hunt, but in reality to get lead and mould a shot-pouch full, with which he would return in the evening. He was always reticent when questioned as to the source of his bullets, and never could he be induced to divulge the secret. The lead-mine (if such it be) yet awaits the prospector's pick.

(TO BE CONCLUDED)

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\* This fort was on the property now owned by Colonel W. A. Gilliam, and near his present residence.